

FOURTEEN LETTERS FROM THE BEYOND

BY THE HAND OF
MARY HAMILTON COATS

WITH A PREFACE BY
G. E. WRIGHT

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Evidences of Spiritualism

THERE is a vast amount of recent isolated personal experience of spiritualistic and supra-natural phenomena and influence now available—which, though perhaps not possessing very great evidential value separately, has considerable evidential value cumulatively. This little Series has been designed to collect together in convenient form thoroughly well-authenticated accounts of personal experiences and phenomena.

1. AFTER-DEATH COMMUNICATIONS
L. M. BAZETT
2. THE GREAT BEYOND AND ITS INHABITANTS
ADAM BOYCE
3. FOURTEEN LETTERS FROM THE BEYOND
MARY HAMILTON COATS
4. PSYCHICAL MISCELLANEA
J. ARTHUR HILL
5. A SOLDIER GONE WEST
6. THE NURSERIES OF HEAVEN
(Double Vol.) Rev. G. VALE OWEN;
H. A. DALLAS.

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PREFACE

AUTOMATIC writing has been the means by which a large, and apparently increasing, number of communications have been received which purport to be originated by those who have "passed over."

The proof or disproof of communication with the discarnate is a matter of profound importance.

With so many records, received through persons of undoubted integrity and sober judgment, such as this automatist, and with so much confirmatory matter arriving by autoscopic means, such as the onija board, the planchette, and the table, it is not possible for the most extreme materialist logically to adopt the attitude that these communications are unworthy of serious attention.

Still less is it reasonable to dismiss them because the picture of the life hereafter which they adumbrate is at variance with our preconceptions of what such life should be. It should be remembered that "The Beyond" is necessarily transcendental, not referable to ordinary physical dimensions. Hence an endeavour to translate the infinite into finite language must needs be wanting in completeness and consistency.

The *modus operandi* in automatic writing is probably in most cases inspirational. The automatist receives affects in impression on his subliminal, his intuitive, self, which impressions are finally translated through the ordinary mechanism of brain and hand into writing. It will be obvious, therefore, that the mentality of the writer must, unconsciously, to a greater or less degree, colour and clothe the original impressions. They may be mingled in a mass of what

Sir Oliver Lodge describes as "emanations entirely from the more remote nerve centres of the brain of the automatist, and therefore of no more value than the record of a dream."

On the other hand there are some cases in which it is difficult to understand how the automatist can have exercised control on the script. There are well established cases in which the writing has been "upside down," starting at the bottom-right-hand corner of the page as if the pencil was being worked by someone sitting *opposite* the writer. Or in other cases, the words are actually inverted, and "looking glass writing," which can only be deciphered by reflection in a mirror, is obtained (Cf. Barrett, *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 191).

It would seem that the only way by which even an approximate solution of this weighty question is likely to be reached is by the collation and comparison of these communications. It is possible that by their correspondences, even by their differences, we may at length arrive at approximate truth.

It is, therefore, a matter of real importance that all *bona fide* records should attain publicity.

The interest to the spiritualist is obvious. The interest to the non-spiritualist should not be less. He is faced with a considerable, and increasing, body of records, such as these. The question, whether they are adequately to be explained by any hypothesis falling within the present known "laws of nature," is one which merits the consideration of every thinking man and woman.

Letters Nos. I to II have already appeared in the columns of the *International Psychic Gazette*, which has been the vehicle for the publication of so many interesting communications of the same nature.

G. E. WRIGHT.

INTRODUCTION

I JUST wish, before giving these letters for publication, to say in a few words how I came to receive them. I had for several years been investigating spiritual phenomena, attending séances, reading and studying the subject. At one "circle" I was told by the medium that my father, William Pinkerton, who had passed over twenty-five years before, gave her a message that if I would sit for inspirational writing he would be able to communicate with me direct.

I immediately put it to the test, and after sitting half-an-hour daily for a fortnight with pencil and paper, he gained sufficient power first to move the pencil, then to make words, and afterwards sentences, Very soon he gave me long letters.

I have never myself written a story of any kind, and could not do so yet. I have tried sometimes when my father was not controlling my hand just to see if it were possible, but with no result except to convince me that my communications come directly from outside of myself, and that my own mentality has nothing to do with their origin.

So I give those letters knowing them to be genuine, and with the hope that they may bring light and comfort to many who are sorrowing hopelessly for the loved ones who have "Gone West."

The first six letters are written to my son Colin (Lieut. Colin C. Coats, who was in France at the time) by his grandfather in spirit. The others speak for themselves.

MARY HAMILTON COATS.

FIRST LETTER

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

It will seem strange to you to receive a letter from me whom you have never seen, and who lives in a different world to yourself, but I have known you since you were a tiny baby and have watched over and cared for you since that time. I have followed you through all your school-days, have rejoiced when you were happy, and have tried to comfort you when you were sad.

You have grown into a fine lad and your many friends on this side of the veil are as proud of you as those you know and see on your side. You have responded to the call of duty along with many other noble boys, and have gone out to fight with them for your home and country.

There is one thing I would like to make you realise, boy Colin, for it will help you through all the horrors you are facing. It is that there is *no* death. You may say "Why; I am in the midst of it," but that is only in a sense. Not one of the boys who falls beside you on those

awful fields of France *dies*. Each and all only leave their physical bodies and are received by their guardian angels and friends immediately they arrive, or, as I might put it are born into another world.

Would you like if I were to write you occasionally and tell you of their experiences? Later on, perhaps, some of them will come and give them first-hand themselves. It will be a unique experience for a soldier in France to be receiving letters "by wireless" from the land beyond the grave, but I hope they will prove as interesting and instructive as all the other letters you are getting from the friends you already know.

I am,

Your affectionate grandfather,

W. P.

SECOND LETTER

THE WELCOME OF THE HERO.

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

Nearly three years ago, when this great war first began, a fine, splendid young hero came suddenly to our world. Many of them did, but this deals with one in particular. He was in a great battle, and in the midst of all the horrors of a heavy bombardment, when he was struck by a piece of shrapnel and knew no more. He awakened to find all quiet around him, for the tide of battle had retreated, and he thought himself lost. He felt curiously free from all feeling of strain and tiredness, and sat up and looked around him. Finally, he rose to his feet and felt himself all over, but no trace of hurt was there, and all around him was a wonderful stillness and calm. "It is strange," he thought; "where can all the boys have got to? and where are the signs of the fight? I must be hopelessly lost!" But as he thus reasoned a voice answered: "No, you are not lost, you

have but come to your kingdom. Many friends await you here, and I have been sent to take you to the place where a glorious welcome awaits you." The boy turned and beheld a man (a soldier like himself, but dressed as were the knights of old) standing beside him, and holding by the bridles two beautiful horses. "Mount," said the stranger, "and let us away!" The boy could not understand the meaning of it all, but he was not able to resist the winning smile of his guide, nor the fascination of the beautiful horse offered him. So he mounted, and off they went, almost flying; and the glory of that ride—over hill and dale, and across the plains, away like the wind—till they came to a lovely city, lying amidst beautiful woods and groves, and with a broad, shining river running right through its heart. As they approached, they drew rein and moved slowly forward. A procession was coming to meet them from the city. First of all, children with flowers—no end of flowers—which were strewn on the path of the boy. Then a huge army of soldiers followed—soldiers, first of the time of his guide, and all of them dressed like knights of old. Then soldiers of later periods. And last of all his own comrades, who had fallen before he had. "What does it mean?" he asked, and his guide told him that

he had come home to the *real* world, and that all those who came to meet him were heroes also who had at one period or another *died* for their country. And this was his "welcome home." So with shouts of joy and welcome from the assembled multitude he passed through their ranks and entered the city. Everywhere the people lined the route and cheered him as he passed, till the procession approached a beautiful building resembling a large hall or church. There they dismounted and entered. As they stepped inside a peal of triumphant music burst forth, and the refrain was taken up by those outside, till the air vibrated with the triumphant melody of it all. At the far end of the great building there was a raised platform, made in the form of a large pulpit, modelled like a huge bird with wings outspread. Under the canopy of those wings stood a warrior priest, dressed in flowing robes of purest white and studded with diamonds. His sword and shield stood up behind him, and their brilliance reflected his upright manly figure, and cast a dazzling radiance around him. His face, lit at that moment with a smile of welcome expressed strength, and love, and divine wisdom. He advanced to meet the boy hero, and led him forward to the altar. There, amid

the silence of the vast crowd who had followed and taken their seats in the hall, he addressed him: "Son, you have come home to your inheritance, to the land where brave men come who have made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of right and liberty; and this first acknowledgment of what you have done is made you publicly by one who fell many centuries ago, also fighting, like yourself, to free and save his country from a foreign yoke." With that the warrior-priest took a wreath of laurel, which the pulpit bird held in its beak, and placed it on the boy's head. Thereupon the whole company knelt down and asked the blessing of the great Over-Soul upon their newly-arrived brother. And as they prayed a ray of golden light descended and streamed on to the boy's head. Again the unseen orchestra pealed out its joyous triumphant symphony, and the people quietly dispersed, leaving the boy and his guide alone amid the softening melody. As it died away the boy again asked: "What does it all mean?" And his guide answered: "It is the welcome prepared for all who, like you, have given their lives for the sake of others. Now we shall go to your personal home, where all the friends whom you knew and loved on Earth await your coming." So he led him to

a beautiful home in this wonderful city, where awaited him all the dear ones whom he had loved and lost awhile. And with them many others who had loved him as a little child, and had come before him to the Summer Land.

THIRD LETTER

BOYS FROM THE BATTLEFIELDS IN THE BEYOND

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

Here comes another story, something quite different from the one you have already had. It deals with two soldier boys who came over some little time ago. They were great friends : had been at school together, joined up together, trained together, and fell together. Their names are Harry and Tom, and my tale begins at the moment they left your world and entered ours.

Both came to consciousness about the same time, and almost simultaneously exclaimed : " Tom, are you hurt ? " and " Harry, boy, I *am* glad to see you safe and sound." They clasped hands and looked around them. Everywhere were traces of the battle, comrades lying prostrate on the ground, and kneeling over them figures of angels, they thought. Presently one after another the prostrate boys rose up,

helped by those wonderful beings. Then the earth seemed to get hazy and indistinct, and all that seemed real to them was their comrades and themselves. As they watched, one whom they had not noticed before came forward and spoke to them. "Boys from the battle," he said, "you have crossed the line, and are now on what people call the Other Side, not the enemy's side, but in the lands beyond the grave. You have died as heroes, fighting for freedom. Come, and I will take you to your home in this new world."

Full of wonderment and curiosity they followed, and found themselves in a procession formed by comrades who had also crossed the line. Escorted by their new friends, they marched off. The march was different from those they had taken of late, when they became so tired and hungry. As they went on they became lively and buoyant; they felt as if treading on air, and sang in chorus all the songs they knew, and then for very joy sang them all over again.

"Are we marching to heaven?" asked one, in a half-joking way. "Yes," answered one of the guides, "to the heaven prepared for you by your devotion to duty and by giving your lives for others." At first the scenery had

seemed shrouded in mist, like the early morning that gives promise of a perfect summer's day. But the haze lifted and the new-comers gazed in speechless admiration at the scene around them. They were marching through a lovely valley, by the side of a river that sparkled as none other they had ever seen. There were grassy hills on either side, which merged into purple and blue as they rose to meet the sky. They came to a pool in the river overshadowed by flowering trees which dipped their branches into the sparkling waters. With one accord the boys halted and looked longingly towards the pool, then turned to their guides, who told them: "Yes, undress, and in you go. This is the pool of Life, and after you have bathed in it you can never feel tired again." So with a joyful shout, in they went, laughing and splashing, and behaving as all boys do when they are happy.

As they scrambled out again their wonderment increased, for the sparkling beauty of their bodies, their vitality and abundant life, and their purified spirit, gave them a feeling almost of awe. Then, in place of the uniform they had been wearing, there lay in neat little piles garments of silvery material that still had a touch of the khaki shade in it. These new

uniforms bore a distinct resemblance to the old ones, but were more easy and light.

By the time the boys had dressed they had settled into a more thoughtful frame of mind, and Tom suggested they should sit down and question their "officers" as to the meaning of these wonders. So they formed a ring around their guides, who willingly complied, and explained thus:—

"It is very simple. You boys have come to the life after death, and this is your first little march of the journey. You have just arrived across the borderland between the two worlds; have bathed, changed, and are now resting and learning a little of the conditions of the new life. What could be more natural and more common-sense? What did you expect was in store for you if you were killed in action?"

"Heaven!" whispered Harry, and the guides smiled.

"Well, you are going there some day; but there are many experiences in front of you before that, and here comes the first of them."

As the guide spoke he turned and looked along the road, and there the boys beheld a troop of children taking their places and lining the path on either side under the trees. There were hundreds of little ones, and their arms were

full of flowers. The boys could not resist the sight, so they rose, instinctively dropped into marching formation, and swung off. The little ones greeted them with shouts of welcome, and showered the flowers upon them as they passed. Then, when all the boys were through, the children fell in behind.

The guides led, and on they went, the scenery ever growing more beautiful, and their hearts more joyful, till they came to a large, lofty mansion, standing on a hillside, almost hidden from view by massive rose trees in full bloom. Dotted over the green sward were little arbours containing moss-covered couches that invited them to rest and meditation.

“ This is to be your home for a little while, boys from the battlefields of life. This is the real starting point of your lives in the spirit-realms—lives which will go onward and upward from height to height. Come now, enter the house with us, and see what is in store for you.” Thus spoke the leading guide, and the boys trooped into a beautiful room, already more than half filled with people. They were greeted with shouts of joy and delight, and the boys felt they had come home indeed, for those were their own friends and comrades, whom they had known and loved on earth.

Harry and Tom were lost in wonderment at the scene. Tom felt a little hand creep confidently into his, and on looking down beheld a lovely young girl laughing up at him. "Why, don't you know me, brother Tom? I am your baby sister who came to this world when one year old. Look, I have grown almost as tall as you are, and am as like you as can be, only of course prettier!" She was, and Tom gave a great laugh. This little sister was a "find" indeed, and worth coming to heaven to see. He turned to Harry, only to see him enfolded in the embrace of a man who seemed as if he would never let him go again. "My father," gasped Harry, "who left us years ago!" "Yes, lad, and who has been with you ever since, unseen and unheard, but still present all the time." The re-united friends went outside, sat down on the grass and talked, and the boys were told many things about the beautiful land they had come to, and the spirit-people there.

"But why," they asked, "are you called spirit-people?"

Harry's father laughed and said, "Why, you are spirit-people too! You have left your bodies lying on the battlefields, and are now in your spirit-bodies. You will get accustomed

to that, although at first it puzzles you. In a short time you will feel the change is so much for the better that you would not like to return to the old conditions again."

"We would not care to do so now," declared both boys; "but what of our mothers?" And with the thought of what they would be suffering they became sad. "We must go to them at once," they declared, "can we get back?"

"Yes, certainly, and we will go with you, but be prepared for a disappointment, for they will not be able to see you nor hear you speak. But you may be able to comfort them, so we will go at once. Now 'will' strongly to go back to earth and to your mothers."

Obedying this injunction, they felt themselves moving rapidly through space, and in what seemed a few moments they stood beside their dear ones. The poor mothers had got the news, and had come together to give and receive what comfort they could from one another. They were sitting holding each other's hands, with a look of hopelessness on their faces pitiful to see.

"This will not do," said Harry's father; "we must lift them out of their despair." He went and stood behind his wife, and motioned Harry

to take his place right in front of her. Then he whispered, "Look straight ahead; there is the boy, not dead, but with you, alive and well and happy, as he deserves to be." Tom and his sister made the same arrangement to announce their presence.

The mothers stopped weeping, and looked at one another with a feeling of awe and comfort creeping over them. "Did you hear anything?" they asked together, and answered breathlessly. "Yes, the boys are here telling us they are not dead, but alive and well. 'Do not grieve,' they say, 'it hurts us.' It is the only thing that hurts us now, for this is a wonderful world we have come to.'"

The boys watched the effect they had produced. The mothers looked at each other with smiles through their tears, and vowed, "We shall do nothing to hurt our boys, so we must grieve no more, but go bravely on through life, knowing that they are with us to the end, which will be but the beginning of life eternal together."

And so we may leave them, happy in the knowledge that Death has no power over Love. As God is Love, so we all in this world and the next live *together* in Him. While Love lasts, there can be no real separation of those who love

one another. The veil between the two worlds He made thin, very thin, and He gave His children the knowledge and power by love to sweep it aside, and stand face to face, those on the one side who have "Gone West," and those on the other who are still journeying towards the Setting Sun.

FOURTH LETTER

FROM SLUMDON, THROUGH SELF-
SACRIFICE, TOWARDS ANGELHOOD

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

I am going to tell you now of another boy who came to us through this great war. He was born and brought up in the slums of a great manufacturing city. His parents belonged to the lowest criminal classes, who lived in wretched lodgings and spent in drink almost every penny they could lay their hands on. They had a large family of miserable little children, of whom this boy was the eldest. From his earliest years he had been taught that there was only one code of morals—to steal everything he could, without being caught. Those better off than himself, he was told, were only there to be plundered, and if he did not do it someone else would, and he would thereby be the loser. When war broke out he had reached the age of eighteen, a wild untamed, irresponsible youth, who had already learned all

the vices known to the regions in which he had been reared, and in whose heart dwelt little of the feelings of honour or human kindness. There was just one little bright spot therein, and that was an unselfish devotion to a sister, two years younger than himself, who had as a baby been hurt in a drunken brawl, and been an invalid ever since. She was looked upon as a nuisance by the other members of the family, and had a great love for this brother who ever took her part and saved her from further violence.

One dreadful night, however, there was a fearful fight between this boy and his father. They were both under the influence of liquor, and mad for the time. The little invalid once more got in the way, was hurled down, and the little flame of her life departed, leaving the crippled material body dead. When she fell, the boy came to his senses and stooped over her in horror. He called to her to speak to him, but no answer came. Wild with remorse he fled the house, wandered the streets, and when morning came, made for the river to end his life. He had a vague feeling that by so doing he might find her again—somewhere, somehow. He reached a bridge that crossed a deep pool, and was on the point of springing on to the

parapet when a muscular hand grasped his shoulder and dragged him back. A sharp voice said sternly—"What! a young fellow going to take his life just when his king and country most need it? Come with me lad, there is something better you can do than that." Dazed with the misery of all he had come through, the boy accompanied his rescuer to a recruiting station and became a soldier, with his life pledged to his country.

The time that followed was dreadful to his untamed nature. He was ordered here and there, made to do set things at set times, with weary drills in the early mornings, and all the other trials an army recruit has to go through. Added to that, he soon learned that tampering with the property of his fellow-soldiers brought prompt and severe punishment. He saw the others generous and helpful towards one another, and when they behaved well to him also, it filled him with wonderment. This new style of conduct he could not understand, till one day, when returning from a long march, one of his comrades stumbled and declared he was done. The boy, obeying an impulse new to him, took the man's rifle and carried it for him. Somehow, he felt happier than he had ever done before. Dropping with weariness

and an added load, yet his heart sang, and he learned for the first time the blessedness of giving instead of trying to take.

Time passed swiftly enough till the order came for active service, and the boy marched off proudly with the rest to fight for his country. Then followed a time of hardship in water-logged trenches, coldness, and physical misery of every description, with shells bursting, comrades being hurt and killed all around him, and then the utter weariness that followed on the unnatural strain of mind and body. During a raid on the enemy trenches, he saw a comrade fall. He went on a few yards, then stopped, and turned back to his aid, when a shell came over, and—oblivion!

In a short time he seemed to awaken out of a most refreshing sleep. All was quiet. He stretched himself, rose up, and looked around. Everything at first seemed hazy, like early morning mists, but by degrees vague forms took shape, and he found himself in a new world. Stillness reigned, and a feeling of calm and peace entered his soul. He wandered aimlessly on, wondering what it meant, but revelling in the sense of freedom from noise, turmoil and fatigue. He had never beheld beautiful scenery before, but just the little bits visible from the train as

he had travelled towards the embarkation port and on arriving in France. But to be able to thus wander at will through beautiful scenery filled him with wonderment. Coming to a beautiful wood, he walked a little way in, and lay down on a mossy bank dreamily wondering where he was, and how he had lost his way, and what had become of the other boys who had disappeared so completely. Gradually the silence lulled him to slumber, and he slept the sound refreshing sleep of a soul new-born into the higher life—the life of the spirit free from the trammels of the flesh, and now able to soar on the wings of the morning up to the throne of the Most High. As he slept peacefully, a change was coming over his face, which had even from babyhood always seemed so old. It gradually lost its hardness, the lines disappeared, and a softened expression rested upon the whole countenance. His whole body also became more refined, and assumed an ethereal beauty never seen on earth.

While he slept a little girl came slowly and haltingly from among the trees. She sat down close by and watched. She was pale and delicate looking, and had a frightened, helpless look, such as animals have that are badly used. She waited patiently, till the boy awoke and

rubbed his eyes. Seeing her, he exclaimed with a cry of fear—" Little sister, have you come to punish me for what I did? I have tried since coming to France to get shot so that I might suffer as you suffered. But I can't manage the one or the other. But—I do not understand! this is not France, or the battlefields! I am alone instead of being surrounded by hundreds of others, and you, the little sister I killed, are with me! You are real, aren't you?" " Yes," replied the child, with a laugh, " I am real. Come and carry me through the beautiful woods as you used to do in the noisy streets. I will direct you where to go." The boy bounded towards her, he stopped short, and exclaimed—" But I killed you!" " No, brother, you only freed me from a life of pain and suffering; carry me now."

So he lifted her in his strong arms and carried her into the woods. And as he went his heart grew light, just as it had when he carried his comrade's rifle. They talked as they went, and the child told him how, when she fell, she had felt a stunning blow, and went to sleep. When she woke up she found herself being carried in the arms of a lovely woman into a room hung with softly-tinted curtains and laid to rest in a little bed. She awakened to find

her beautiful new friend still with her. Then she had made friends with the other little ones, who were all so bright and happy, and so greatly interested in her.

“ But how,” her brother asked, “ did you find me ? ” “ Oh,” she replied, “ I always loved you, for you were the only one who was kind to me. I told the lovely lady I wanted my brother, and she said I would have him soon. So she brought me to this wood, and told me to go on till I found my brother, for he was here now.” “ And are you still in pain and suffering ? ” “ No,” she said, “ I only appeared to you as lame and halt at first in case you would think I was not real. Let me down and I will show you ! ” She sprang out of his arms and danced around him, all deformity gone. In his delight he caught her up again and bounded off with her.

Playing and rejoicing thus they came to the home where the child lived, and were met by troops of children, who had been watching for them, for they had been told the story of their lives. Passing into the beautiful home, they were warmly welcomed by the bright spirit-teachers there. The lad was taken charge of by guides who undertook to instruct him in all qualities of goodness and purity he had missed in his short life on earth. He had already risen

24 FROM SLUMDOM TOWARDS ANGELHOOD

high in that he had given his life in helping a fallen comrade, and his reward was immediate help and upliftment towards the celestial heights.

And thus it was the poor outcast from the city slums set out on a new journey through spiritual spheres, stepping off from the height of his self-sacrifice and gaining that knowledge truth, wisdom and learning, that, no matter how depraved a soul may be on earth, it is enabled by the law of eternal progression to become at last one of the angels of God.

FIFTH LETTER

COMRADES IN LIFE AND DEATH

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

I met a boy here a short time ago who was killed in France. He told me his experiences, and I give them to you, in almost his own words. I think they will interest you. He had, previous to the war, been employed in a large mill ; but when the call came for men, to fight for the freedom of his country and other countries, he joined at once, and trained and went to France. Many of the lads working with him enlisted in the army at the same time, so they kept together from the first. There was also a young son of one of their employers, who got his commission and asked to be put with his father's employees. He had been learning the business in its various branches, and knew all the boys, and was greatly liked by them. Before long they were all in the thick of the fighting. This young officer, like so many of his kind, was always ready for an adventure, and willing to take any risk to gain

information about the enemy, or in some form or other to make things hot for him. The boys would do anything for him, because he was just as considerate for them as he was reckless for himself.

One dark night the C.O. came round and expressed great uneasiness over the quietness in the enemy lines facing them. As usual, this young officer volunteered to go over and find out, if possible, why they appeared all to have gone to sleep. "No! he would take no one with him," he said; "quieter and safer alone." So with much misgiving he was allowed to go. Half an hour passed, then an hour, and he did not return, and anxiety over him became unbearable. When nearly two hours had passed, and still no sign, his platoon asked permission to go and look for him. It was granted, and under their non-com. they set off. My boy friend, whose name is Albert, familiarly called "Bertie," was among them. And a weird night they had of it, falling into shell-holes, and scrambling out again only to be caught in wire entanglements, sinking in horrible mud nearly to their waists, and again having to throw themselves face downward on the ground when flares went up—anon, running the guantlet of snipers and an occasional burst of machine-gun fire.

But although they wandered about for hours, no sign of their young officer could they find.

As they were making their way back, Bertie somehow got separated from his comrades and strayed off in a wrong direction. He had not gone far when he heard a familiar noise, threw himself down, felt a fearful concussion, and knew nothing more. Waking up shortly after, he felt shaky for the moment, but to his satisfaction found himself apparently unhurt. "Well, that was a narrow squeak! That Jack Johnson must have obliterated me but for a miracle!" He looked about, and to his dismay found one of his hands lying by itself a short distance off. He knew it by the finger-ring. He raised his arms, expecting to see one of them a stump; but no, his first impression was after all the correct one—he was in possession of both hands, ring and all! "How strange," he thought, "I know! I've been shell-shocked, and have gone a little balmy for the time being. I will try to find my way back to the battalion and report to the doctor. This may mean a holiday in Blighty for a bit—Cheero!—and I don't feel bad at all, except for this hallucination about my hand."

He started off to find his way back, when he was pulled up by the sound of a familiar voice—

“ Halt, old man, and wait for me ! I’ve got lost some, and as you seem to know where you are going I will accompany you.” He turned round, and there was the boy he had come out to seek, apparently alive and well too.

“ I am glad to see you, sir,” he said. “ We waited till we could stand it no longer, then came to look for you. I have got away from the platoon somehow, but I have found you, and that’s the main thing.”

“ Come along then,” said the officer ; “ let us hurry, in case we are posted missing. That would mean a wire home, and distress there ; so we must get back in time to prevent that. I have had such a curious experience ; I must tell it to you ; for I wonder if I am suffering from shock. Do I look all right ? ”

“ Never saw you look better, sir,” said Bertie ; “ do you see anything wrong with me ? ”

They stopped and faced each other, looked each other all over, then had to admit that each, instead of looking as if he had put in a strenuous, anxious night, appeared “ in the pink.”

“ Well, in a way, that is disappointing,” said the officer, “ for I thought I had qualified for a short leave, hospital, V.A.D.’s, pretty ones, petting, entertainments, and all the joys that

await a chap who has got knocked out for a bit."

"I thought so too, sir," ruefully confessed Bertie; whereat they both laughed, for they had never in their lives felt so fit and strong.

Then the officer told why he thought he must have got the shock that suggested all the delights he had been dreaming of. He had wandered about a bit, always getting nearer and nearer to the enemy's lines, till suddenly he heard talking. He made towards it, and discovered that he was right up to the parapet of an enemy trench. Most of the wire had been quietly removed, to allow of troops getting through for a raid. Not content with that information, he drew himself up, to take a peep over, when he felt a hot sting in his head, and a sensation of falling backwards. Then he had found himself sitting on the ground just a little dazed. "This won't do much good," he thought; "I will try another peep." So he did, and this time no one seemed to see or take any notice of him. So he became bolder, clambered over right on to the top of the trench, crawled along it, saw all the preparations for an attack at daybreak, dropped hastily down again, made off—and then lost his way! He wondered what had caused his fall, for he

thought a bullet had struck him, but there was no sign of it anywhere. He thought, had his brain perhaps given way? "But whether that is the case or not," he wound up, "it is our duty to get a report in at once." So they hurried on, and presently came to their company still on duty.

The other members of the patrol had returned before them, and were all looking very done up. "It is curious," thought Bertie, "how *we* are not feeling the fatigue of such a night, for neither of us could ever stand much of that sort of thing." Then aloud, as he got amongst them—"Well, boys, I found the youngster" (their pet-name for the young lieutenant). But they went on talking, and paid no attention. "Are you chaps all blind and deaf?" demanded Bertie; "you are saying that we must both have gone West! yet, here we are, beside you, and you take no notice! Speak to them sir; they won't play off any of their jokes on you."

So the young officer spoke to the men, but likewise received no reply, nor any sign of recognition. "They are all mad," he muttered; "Now for the C.O. and our report. We will attend to them later." They sought out the Captain commanding, and found him talking to another officer. He was saying—"And he

was my very best lieutenant; I somehow thought he could go anywhere with comparative safety. I was a fool to let him go. It seems that one of his platoon, who went to look for him, is missing too."

"Not a bit of it sir," exclaimed the youngster, stepping up; "we are both here, and have come to report an attack by the enemy at daybreak on this part of the line."

But the commander went on talking, and also took no notice. "Good heavens! what has come to them all?" cried the boy. Then getting desperate at being so persistently ignored, he shouted, "An attack by the enemy at daybreak!" As still no attention was paid, he said—"Try it together, Bertie; they must be made to hear us." And together, right into the commander's ears, they yelled with the full power of their voices—"An attack on our lines at daybreak!"

The C.O. suddenly stopped talking, and exclaimed—"I have just received an impression that there is something up, and that we had better be on the alert. Go and call up the reserve, for it may be a big thing. I like this silence less than ever."

The two boys stood back and exclaimed, "Silence! Does he call our noise 'silence' or

'an impression'? Something is badly out of gear; but our place is with the boys, so come on."

They returned to the platoon, and the young officer heard his sergeant receiving the orders that should have been given to himself, and he stood by wondering, and rather miserable. No one would take any notice of either him or Bertie, and as they seemed most distinct figures to each other, it puzzled them greatly.

However, they stood to their posts, and sure enough the attack came in strength. After a fierce fight the enemy was beaten off, with considerable loss, and our boys heard the C.O. say—"That was a lucky thought of mine, to get up the reserves; we would have had a bad time otherwise."

"Well, we have done some good, Bertie," remarked the "youngster"; "but hullo! what's this?" A curious thing was happening. Crowds of boys who both had known in the earlier stages of the war, and who had been "killed," were pressing around them and giving them a hearty welcome to the land beyond. "So you two have Come West also! That is fine, and we are glad to see you! It is better here—far better."

"Come West," exclaimed "the youngster";

“ we have done nothing of the kind. But I’ll admit we have been shell-shocked, or something, for no one takes any notice of us, and you fellows too are all ‘ dead.’ ”

“ If we are dead,” was the laughing response, “ so are you ! *We* can all hear and see you, and you can hear and see us. What do you make of that ? ”

“ Shell-shock,” dismally complained Bertie, “ in a new and improved form, I suppose.”

“ Not a bit of it. Waken up, both of you, and try to realise that you *are* dead.”

“ We only realise that we must be mad, for we never felt better in our lives ; and as for being dead, that’s too funny for words ”—and they broke into peals of laughter.

“ That’s better ; no madness nor anything else the matter with you, Bertie,” said an old comrade coming forward and putting his hand on the lad’s shoulder. “ Do you remember your mother ? ”

“ Of course I do ; would know her anywhere, although she died when I was a kiddie. Why ? ”

“ Because she is here. She has been waiting for you, and wonders if you will know her still.”

The ranks of the boys opened, and a woman dressed in white robes, with a glad and shining face, ran forward holding out her hands.

"Mother!" gasped Bertie, and he took her in his arms. The others stood by looking on with happy faces, while "the youngster," feeling sadly mystified, sat down and wondered what was coming next.

"Here I am," cried a happy girl's voice, in answer to his thought, and before he realised what had happened he found his little sister, whom he had lost a year before through fever, perched on his knees and hugging him tightly. Then he realised also that this was no dream, but that he had crossed the line indeed.

"It is all so natural," he remarked, when he was permitted to speak. "I thought Heaven was different somehow."

"So it is, but you have not got there yet. Only, this rest stage on the journey towards it is full of life and beauty and joy, and we will all journey together towards Heaven which we will reach some day. Meanwhile this is a world where there is no fighting, no tiredness or sickness or misery of any kind, except for those who have led evil lives on earth. Our spiritual bodies never go wrong, and we do not have to work to earn money to support them. But one of the greatest of all God's gifts, we think, is the power to communicate with those we have left behind, and to be able to assure them that

there is no death—only a larger, fuller and more natural life.” So spoke “the youngster’s” little sister; and there we may leave them to proceed on their heavenward pilgrimage.

SIXTH LETTER

WAR AND PEACE PICTURES IN THE BEYOND

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

Here is a little incident I witnessed the other day, that I thought might appeal to you, now you are back in England and working hard to become a flying boy. I often meet "boy-birds" when passing from my home in the Summerland to the earth, and I always take a great interest in the daring youngsters. Well, as I was journeying leisurely a few mornings ago to keep my daily appointment with your mother, who sits so regularly for her stories from our side of the Border, I met a friend hurrying in another direction, and evidently in great anxiety. He called to me, "Come and help; my boy is flying and is got surrounded by enemy machines; I must save him if possible." So I hastily wirelessly for a friend to take my place for the time being at your mother's desk, and I darted off with the anxious father. We came upon a most exciting scene. High up, over

the enemy lines, was this fearless boy, making no attempt to escape, but manœuvring his machine to keep free of the enemy fliers, and at the same time taking every chance to fire at them. He himself had escaped hurt up to the present, but it seemed as if he were bound to be caught between cross-fire aimed at him from all directions. There was no time to lose, so we sent out a call for help. It was answered immediately by hundreds of our soldier lads who have given their physical lives for their country, but who in their spirit-bodies are still doing their bit. Many of them, on seeing what was happening, went away in quest of the other British flying boys out on patrol, and influenced them quickly in their comrade's direction. Others surrounded the daring fighter, and by their power prevented the bullets from making a direct hit on him, or on a vital part of his machine. They also suggested to his mind moves that enabled him to cope with his enemies till one of them fell, and then another. We then saw the boy's face become desperate—his munitions were exhausted; but his spirit-friends had not failed him, for at that instant there swept up from different directions many more flying corps boys, who ended the fight speedily by wounding or killing some more of the

enemy, and chasing the rest away. The boys all returned together, and were warm in their praise of the young rascal who had done so well, and had been in such a tight corner.

His father then told me he had been "taken" when this boy was a child, and he had been his guardian-spirit ever since. His mother was an invalid, and having lost nearly all the little money he left her through unfortunate investments, she was almost completely dependent upon the boy. Hence his anxiety to keep him still in the material body.

"And right you are," I said, "but what of the enemy boys he and those who came to his rescue have sent into our world?"

"They and their people," he returned, "have brought this war and all its horrors upon themselves, and on nearly the whole world besides; therefore they must take the consequences. But I am interested in all those problems, and if you will come with me when you have time, we will see if we can gain any insight into the Karma of a country which has made herself a criminal among the nations of the world." I replied that nothing would interest me more, for I was collecting information and stories to give to the world of men, with the hope of lighting a lamp of truth to guide people into a more reasonable

view of the life beyond than most of them at present held. So we made an appointment and separated, each to attend to his own duties.

Later, we met again and my friend said, "I have for a long time been studying the psychology of the German mind, and it is an interesting study. Come with me and we will attend a meeting of German spirit people now. It is to be a large gathering, and will consist for the most part of the more advanced thinkers, and those who have progressed since coming to our side. I have many friends among them, and know we will be made welcome. So he conducted me to a large town, which I might guess to be geographically situated in the spheres just over Berlin. In the centre of the city there stands a magnificent hall which as we approached was rapidly filling with people. (You would call them "spirit-people.") We entered and took our seats in an upper gallery, from which we had a commanding view of the whole hall. In the area there was a long table and surrounding this, covering a wide floorage, were arranged seats all facing towards the centre. Those seats were rapidly filling with men and women who looked and were the leaders of the German race in qualities which the world has seen too little of in the history of that nation. They took

their places in order, a row of philanthropists nearest the table, and encircling it ; then round that a circle of doctors, then ministers of religion, and so on—all classes and degrees being represented. And, on the outside of all, two circles of women.

“ That is a curious formation,” I remarked. “ Should the women, by courtesy, if for no other reason, not be in the centre ? ”

“ No,” said my friend, “ the German women have always been kept on the outside of national affairs, and they still take their places there. Those women, however, are to be the leaders and inspirers of a great Women’s Movement that is going to come into Germany after the war.”

But the hall is now nearly full ; only one seat remains at the head of the table ; a hush falls over the great assembly, and a minister rises, raises his hand towards Heaven and in pleading accents asks the Father of All to send guidance and help to the warring world below, but special help and guidance for Germany, as from the spirit-side of life they can see that she had been the cause of it all. The people bow their heads and join with him in his prayer, and wait. Then there comes a ray of light straight on to the vacant seat at the head of the table, and at the same moment there appears a figure walking

towards it from the main entrance. We have to cover our eyes as he comes for he is so bright.

“A messenger from God,” is the awed whisper. This angel-messenger takes his seat quietly till the people have got a little accustomed to his brilliancy. Then he rises, and in a voice indescribably pure, sweet, and strong, says, “Children of The Father, I have been sent in answer to your prayer for guidance. You all know the part your country has taken in this terrible upheaval, and you also know the part she will have to play in the righting of the wrongs she has committed. To give you a better understanding I will throw a picture upon the inward sight of all present, of that which is past, and then another of that which is to come. The first is to give you a thorough realisation of your country’s position, just before and during this war. And the second is to guide you in your work of redemption and expiation.

Then passed before us, amidst a breathless hush, such a scene as I will never forget. It opened upon a large room, and a few men gathered there. They were sitting round a table planning a world conquest as calmly as they would have talked over a walking tour.

They moved armies about, and talked of great battles and men's lives, without the least concern for the real meaning of all the horror and misery of it. While this was going on the walls of the room seemed to fall away and those men's thoughts escaped out into the surrounding darkness and went—we could not see where. But shortly they brought their answer from the black void without. As we watched there appeared first one face, and then another, coming closer and closer to the plotters in the room. Each face seemed more hideous than the last, till there were hosts of them. At first they seemed rather bewildered at their liberation from the dark haunts of the lowest Hell, where they had been confined, but it did not take them long, when once they understood what was being planned, to realise it was the plotter's evil thoughts that had reached them and set them free. Then they in their turn seized their opportunity, and in turn vied with one another in their suggestions of wickedness to the men at the table. They told them that the conquest of the world was an easy thing if they laid aside all scruples ; that war was war, and for it to be successful it must be fought with only one thought and aim, to win ; that any feeling of honour towards other countries was out of place

and would lose them their object, but that unscrupulous warfare, anything that would intimidate their enemies, no matter how horrible it was, would very soon bring world conquest. After that, if they wanted to reform, they could rule justly and well, if they found it would pay.

The men at the table were quite unconscious of the army of demons their wicked thoughts had evoked, and wondered at the ease with which ideas occurred to them in planning their nefarious work. Then, that meeting over, the demons vanished, and we caught sight of them here and there, in their dark bodies, moving hurriedly about, bringing liberation to others like themselves, and all carrying in their hands burning torches which glowed with a dark crimson flare, which gave the appearance of a world on fire, so numerous were they.

Then we saw another scene—the armies of Germany overrunning the countries of her enemies, and always the dark hosts from the unseen around them urging them to commit all the atrocities that have horrified the world. For a while the unequal fight went on, until we saw small bands of the Children of Light coming up to defend the peoples fighting bravely for their existence, against overwhelming odds. Those little bands, although numerous, could not for

a long time stay the onrush of the legions of evil, but by degrees they gained strength, and eventually drove the evil ones back, and down to the regions from which they had come.

The darkness began to lift over the fighting world, and when we could see clearly, oh, what a scene of desolation lay before us! Desolated countries, starving people, little children fatherless, women mourning for their sons, and a world of God's children crying, "Why had He forsaken them?" A sob went up from the gathering when the picture reached this point.

Then the scene changed, and we saw the fields in the devastated countries being ploughed and sown, and German spirits influencing their people still in the body to help. Houses were being re-built, German spirits again helping, and mourners being comforted and helped, and again German spirit-people were doing their best in the work. Scientists, doctors, and chemists were actively engaged, and all branches of work in the outraged countries were being re-organised and pushed forward for the betterment of humanity; and everywhere German spirit-people were giving of their best to help those their country had so grossly wronged. Their best thoughts and inventions

were not being given to their own countrymen, but to those their countrymen had injured.

Then the picture finished with a symbolical view of the German nation, repentant, risen, purified, and the words in letters of gold—
“Germany will repay.”

“This is the answer to your prayer for guidance,” said then our angelic Messenger; “see that ye fail not!” And he went from among us, and those assembled, humbly and with contrite hearts, dispersed to begin the work of reparation. I thanked my friend for bringing me to this wonderful meeting, and have given it to you just as I saw it.

SEVENTH LETTER

A YOUNG OFFICER'S REPORT FROM THE BEYOND

MY DEAR BOY COLIN,

I have brought a boy with me this morning. who wants to give his story to your mother himself. I will merely be the interpreter on this occasion. This boy has never known before that he could convey messages from the other side, and is full of enthusiasm about it. This story, he says, he hopes his own people will read and recognise, for he has been trying to make himself seen and heard to them, but has failed. His full name and address he cannot give yet, for a name and address are not "a thought," so cannot be conveyed correctly to the brain of a purely inspirational medium. Automatic or mechanical writing is required for that, and it is very difficult to develop. This little explanation has had to be made to our young friend, who thought that he might get through anything quite easily. However, apart from that, his whole story runs evenly on in a flow of connected thoughts, and there will be no difficulty in

getting it through just as he gives it. Here, he begins—

This is a queer experience indeed, not only my coming back and giving my experiences, but "dying," as they call it, and all connected with this new life. At least it is to me, who never thought of it before. I am a bit "wandered" yet, but am rapidly adjusting myself to the new conditions. And, my word, this world and life do take the biscuit! Think of it, you fellows, who are always fagged, or hungry, or have colds, or chilblains, or a hundred other things, or all of them. Here we hardly know that we have bodies. They are so perfect in every way that they give us no trouble at all. We can go any distance in a few moments by just wishing to do so. We do not even need to trouble to speak unless we like, but just flash our thoughts from one to the other, in kind of wireless messages, and no "swatting" to get up the code either. It just seems to come to one's understanding. Flimsy and cloudlike beings, you say. No fear! We are as solid to ourselves as you are in your bodies of flesh and blood. We look the same as we did only "prettier." We feel quite solid to the touch, and have sensations somewhat similar to what we have before, without any of

the inconveniences attendant on the physical body. We have beautiful houses and cities, and as for the country scenery—I can't describe its loveliness !

I am so taken up with this new life that I have almost forgotten that I came to give you my experiences. Jove ! it is funny for a fellow who never wrote a word in his life to begin in this way and write his autobiography after his " death." Death ! it is nothing—just a going to sleep. But to my tale. It begins to look hazy already, for although I can come at will to visit you people you are not nearly so clear and distinct as you used to be ; but the world I live in although all around you, and unseen by you, is the real one. There I go again. I am no good at telling " my life." Well, I will perhaps keep to the point this time.

I was just a kid at school when the war broke out, and was a member of the school Cadet Corps. Being half-trained to stand-at-ease, form-fours, and obey orders, I applied for and got my commission in a famous Highland Regiment. Then, after a very short proper training, we were sent to France. (I would not like to be the German rulers when they come to this side. No flowers and beautiful cities for them, but a life of darkness, and war, and

hell, for the time it will take them to work off all the sorrow and misery they have caused, and that won't be done in a day.) Well, we were sent straight into "hell," and told that was our bit to hold and to keep. And we kept it, and took a little bit more of the fire and brimstone land from the Hun too. One night we were told to make an attack, and take over a bit more. We did not want it, for our own portion was bad enough. We did not know where the enemy could retire to if we took over the whole of the lower regions from him! But orders had to be obeyed, so we made our preparations, steadied our nerves with our tot of rum, and went over. And what a fight that was! I don't know what happened, beyond hearing myself shouting to my boys to "come on." They came. The enemy did not fight clean, and that sent us mad. But in the end we drove him out—all of him that was left to drive. Then we looked round for ourselves. That sight I want to forget. There were few of us left, and all wounded and bleeding. I could hardly stand from loss of blood, but where it was coming from I did not know. We patched each other up as well as we could, and then waited for the counter-attack. It came, but so did our reserves and it was beaten off.

Meanwhile, I felt I was "done," and just wanted to sleep, so crept into a corner—and slept. When I wakened it was to find myself being carried bodily away. At first, I thought it was the ambulance fellows, and wondered how they managed to go so smoothly over rough ground, but the sensation was pleasant, and as I felt tired, I did not trouble to open my eyes. Then I was laid down, and all was still around me. Curiosity overcame my languor, and I looked up to find myself lying on a comfortable couch, in a restful pretty room, and a number of people standing round looking at me, with such expression on their faces as made me feel shy, for I just caught the words here and there, "Little Hero," "Brave Lad," and other things like that. "Am I in Blighty already?" I asked. "No, son, in a far finer place; but sleep, and when you awaken we shall tell you all about it." So I slept soundly, and when I next came to consciousness I sat up quite refreshed.

This is a sudden recovery, I thought. I will go back to the line now. "No; not yet, at least," said a voice at my side, and turning round I beheld such a dear old lady beside me. She said, "You know me quite well by sight." "Yes," I replied, "at least the portrait of my

old grandmother, whom I never saw in life, is exactly like you." "I am your grandmother, but I am not really old now. I just made myself look so, so that you would recognise me. This is my appearance now." And she changed in some mysterious way into a beautiful woman, who might not be more than thirty. "Well," I said, "this beats *Alice in Wonderland*. Am I dreaming?" "No," she said, "you are awake, never need to sleep again. You have died for your country in the battlefields of France." "What nonsense," I was rude enough to say, "I am very much alive." "Then come with me and I will prove it to you" she said.

So off we went, but we had not gone many steps from her home (where I had been taken) till several chaps came along who had been killed before me. They congratulated me on my promotion, and volunteered to show me round "this ripping place," as they called it. We all went together, Grandmother too, but as she has since become like a very dear sister to me, and is really young and pretty, I absolutely refuse to call her grandmother! The beauties of this place are indescribable, and so are the delights of meeting many nice friends. You do not wait here for introductions, but

speak to anyone whose face you like, and so many delightful chums are made.

After a while I went back to earth to my own people, and found them all dressed in black, and with such sad hearts that it hurt me. I did all I could to make them know that I was alive and well, but it was no use, and I became very depressed and sad. I returned home and told my sister-grandmother, and she said she had a friend who could get messages through to the earth-people by the hand of his daughter, still there. So we went to him, and he said I could give my story myself. So here I am. It is queer, but fine.

There are, I am told, many mediums, but they are often scoffed at by people who do not know. I would have done it myself before I came here. But I do wish some of my own people would sit for it and get some writing. I would love to come and talk to them in that way. Perhaps if any of them read this they will do it. Another thing is—I suppose my way of talking of the life beyond death may shock some good people, but I want to tell them that death does not change us in the very least, and I am the same boy that I was before I left hell in France. Only the chances for becoming good and clever are greater here, and the work

is just that which you like best. I am told that some day, if we work for it, we can become angels ourselves. Well, we seem nearer to that here than on earth, but are still a long way off it yet.

I think that is all just now, and I feel ever so much more satisfied since I have been allowed to give my "experiences." Do you think that with practice I could write interesting letters home, if one of my people would become my secretary and give me the opportunity?

Grandfather again speaks—This letter, as you will see, is dictated entirely by the boy himself, and I would ask all who may read it, and who have lost friends, to lay aside only half an hour each day to develop writing mediumship; for the joy it would bring to themselves, and to those they have "lost" would more than repay them for the trouble. The two worlds are close together, and the separation between them was never meant to be so complete as the age of materialism has made it. God is love, and never intended His children to be sundered from those they love either in life or death.

EIGHTH LETTER

A WRITER'S FIRST MESSAGE FROM OVER YONDER.

This letter, and those which follow, were received from various communicators, the writer's father desiring to afford opportunity for others to communicate by the hand of his daughter.

This morning when I sat down to receive my communication from "the other side," my father wrote—"There is one of the boys here this morning, who was a writer on your side, and he is very anxious to get a letter through." Then the control changed, and a stranger to me wrote :—

Good morning, lady of the misty lands! It is indeed strange to revisit one's old haunts, and to view them from another phase of life. I understand now something of the meaning of those queer turns of inspiration I used to have when writing. Some days I sat at my desk like a wooden mummy, as far as ideas were concerned, on others my pen used to fly, and I hardly knew what I was writing till the fit passed, and

I re-read what I had received. It is all clear to me now, and incomprehensible from *this* side how people fail to understand whence and how their inspirations come. It is different with one who is conscious of it, and who sits at appointed times for writing. Then one is prepared for whatever comes, and takes it as a matter of course. Until a few minutes ago you did not know in the least what was in store for you, and are now receiving a letter from a total stranger, conscious all the time that all you are getting is entirely from without yourself.

Well, it is my duty to tell you something of myself, now that I have come. Your father introduced me a moment ago as "one of the boys, a writer," and that is a start, but a very meagre one. I was on the staff of one of your daily papers, I don't know quite how long ago, but before the war, and joined the colours near the beginning of the outbreak. Ugh! but it was horrible, and I do not want to go back on that time. I was quite unsuited for a soldier's life, and it was misery to me from first to last. But like all the rest I did my bit—and fell.

For a seemingly long time, after being hit, I slept or was unconscious, until suddenly waking

up, I found myself in a strange place. It is difficult to describe, for you have nothing to compare with it on earth. I was in a dark-grey country, with only a little light showing on the distant horizon—a weird red kind of light like the first glimmer of daybreak on a stormy morning in the dead of winter. “Dead” is the word, for everything around gave that feeling—bleak, cold, and dead. I shivered, and wondered where I had got to.

I arose and wandered towards the distant light instinctively ; and as I went faint sounds began to penetrate the gloom and silence around. At first they seemed far off, then gradually coming nearer they swelled louder and louder, till all around me there was a perfect hurricane of sound. It seemed at first like the faint distant boom of the guns ; then from all sides as it came nearer and the thunder of it roared with ever increasing violence, a faint tinkle of bells blended into the volume of sound. The vibrant note of a bugle rang out the “assembly” call, while blending into that, in indescribably beautiful harmony, crept the joyous notes of a wonderful triumphant melody that rose and fell, now plaintive, now joyful, till my heart stood still with rapturous wonder.

As it died away—not into the distance again,

but all around me—a voice spoke, a voice so beautiful that it could hardly be distinguished at first from the music :—“ We have come for you, brave boy,” it said. “ You have finished your work on earth, and your new life is before you ; come ! ” Suddenly the darkness disappeared as if scales had fallen from my eyes, and I beheld all around me crowds of bright boys and girls, all holding out their hands to me with loving welcome. I timidly grasped the nearest, and to my overpowering delight found they belonged to a brother and sister I had lost long ago. “ We have been waiting for you,” they declared, “ for a long time, but could not get you to waken up.” “ Why,” I exclaimed, “ I have just left the fight.” “ No, you were *killed* long ago,” they told me, “ but you were an unbeliever in a future life, and thought that death ended all. So, your mind being automatically set against awakening into your new condition, we have had to use great power and noise to force you awake. Now that we have got you, however, we shall keep you ; so come along with us. We have lovely homes to show you, and many friends are waiting to meet you.”

Even yet I felt in a dream, but was allowed no opportunity to sink back into unconsciousness,

for they seized hold of me and carried me off, laughing and chatting all the time, and heralding their coming in the same way that they had first used to make me conscious of their presence.

“ I thought all would be quiet and peaceful after death,” I complained petulantly, for curiously enough I did not want to be disturbed, but just to be left to sleep on. My remark was greeted with shouts of jolly, hearty laughter, and a renewal of the bells, bugles, and big gun game. “ Well you are a queer lot,” I grumpily observed ; “ the funniest angels I ever heard of. You are just a crowd of irresponsible noisy youngsters, and there is not even a harp amongst you, nothing but noisy row-making things.” (I did not admit the effect their music had had on me, but I think they knew it.) “ No,” was the laughing retort, “ but we have brought the harp for you, since that is the only instrument you imagine can be played in heaven,” and the young monkeys thrust a harp into my hands, and told me to strike up and lead the band !

It was too much ; I could withstand them no longer. All desire to sleep vanished, and I entered into the game heartily. All this time we were travelling—I did not know how—we were simply going on, and I was being swept

along in the midst of the hilarious company. But now we approached what seemed to be a little country town. "Why, it is like my native place!" I exclaimed. "And so it is," they said. "It is its spirit-counterpart, and here your father and mother are anxiously waiting for you." I looked ahead and there they were standing together, at the door of a beautiful home among the flowers. "We've got him awakened at last," was the salutation from my escort, "but it was a job indeed. He meant to sleep for ever, if he had had his way, but he has realised already that his work is by no means done because he has left his physical body, and he has begun his new life by playing (?) the harp, the only instrument he would have anything to do with." There was a general laugh at this, but I paid no attention, being at the moment fully occupied in greeting and embracing my dear parents. My! but it was a moment worth living for, aye and worth "dying" for too.

I spent some time after this at home, and got to know all my young friends, and actually started learning to play the harp! I made quite fair progress, for my sister took me in hand, and as she is a beautiful player I hope soon to do her credit.

One day I said to my mother, "Isn't it a pity

the people on earth have such hazy ideas of the after life? What a difference it would make to them if they could only realise it as it really is." She replied, "Well, boy, go back and tell them of it." I laughed and told her that the days of miracles were over. "Oh, no," she answered, "this is no miracle, but a work that is being done every day. Come with me, and I will show you." So she took my hand, and together we traversed the shadows surrounding the earth; then hunted about till we espied a light, just a little starlike light.

"This is what we are looking for," my mother said. "It is the particular light that shines in spirit as belonging to a writing medium." So we made for the light, and when we came to it found it to be carried by you, lady of the mists! Your father and mother on our side of the veil, kindly gave me permission to send my first message myself, and so it is given. I have much that I would like to say yet. May I come again? Thank you. Good-morning!

NINTH LETTER.

A DOCTOR'S NEW VIEW OF THE BRAIN.

The following message was received from an Army doctor who was killed in France.

I don't know what to say now that I have got started. I am told to think my thoughts very clearly and strongly, but with so many boys standing round that is very difficult. They all want to write, and their thoughts and words confuse me somewhat. However, I will do my best, as I have been privileged to come closest to the medium.

The first thing that strikes me is wonder at the peculiar form a human brain takes as seen from the spirit side. I was a doctor, killed in France, and thought that I knew most there was to know about the anatomy of the brain, but I see now that none of us seem to grasp the important part of it. It is like a delicately stringed instrument that can be played upon by every passing current, from a gale of thought-force to the gentlest tremor. It is so delicate that the

slightest thing can put it out of order, and yet so wonderfully divided, that the man inside can use bits of it himself sufficient for his everyday life, while there is a little corner reserved to receive and register impressions from without, meaning from the spirit-world.

This can be developed to such an extent, as in the case of the medium I am using, that it can receive a long and complete communication, and register it through the hand in writing, without its having any connection with the other working parts. I see now that no doctor or specialist on earth can fully understand the brain, unless he has well developed the spiritual sight, or a high form of clairvoyance.

All doctors should have this gift or do their best to develop it, if they are to have a complete comprehension of their work. I did not have it, and would not have believed in it if any one had told me of it, but I see now how very important it is, and am trying my best to let it be known.

My work is now going to be to select sensitive young men who are going to be doctors and to do my best to help this development. It would mean so much to the human race if all those in authority over the physical health of the people knew a little more about the higher forms of

matter, as well as the lower. But the boys round, who are not doctors, say this is a queer message to send to the land we have left. So I will take one remark and write it down. It comes from a boy who was killed (as you would say) in Gallipoli.

It is—"Tell the people our sacrifice has not been in vain. Victory will be ours, and although the price in lives to them has been high, we who have given those lives would do it all over again, for the sake of the good it is going to bring to the world, and also for the joyful life beyond it has brought us into. Tell them not to mourn so. There is nothing but joy here. To witness their sorrow is our only grief. Another boy suggests that I might send their love to all their friends. I can't do that personally, but all the friends who have lost dearly loved boys, husbands, brothers, sons, sweethearts, can rejoice with the knowledge of their unbroken love, now and for all time."

Now, for a first attempt I think this letter is long enough, so I will conclude with just one request to all who may read it—"Pray for us, not to get us out of Purgatory, for we are not in that sulphurous-sounding place, but to link us closer in love and sympathy and nearness. Yes, actual personal nearness to those we have

left for a little while. We all thank our medium for her willing help and kind thoughts, and will come again some other time, when we hope to be allowed to give a report of ourselves collectively and individually.

TENTH LETTER.

PARTED IN LIFE : UNITED IN DEATH.

I came this morning, back to the world of men once more, to give other young fellows a solemn warning. I know there is a great deal of heroism among them at this time of trial, but there are also many influences among them that are by no means good.

Before the war I was an engineer. I loved my work, which was making machinery for mining plant. When I was about thirty, I was sent to Rhodesia in charge of a full plant, to set up mining on a big scale for a wealthy company. All went well and promised huge fortunes for all concerned.

For two or three years I worked hard and honestly ; then I took a well-earned holiday to one of the big towns, and from that date my fall began. I went about with other young men, making up for lost time as we put it, and got into no end of mischief. We flung money away, and by the time our holiday was over I had spent every penny of my three years' handsome

salary, which I had been saving towards the day when I might have a home of my own. Before leaving England I was engaged to a dear little girl, and it was a promise that I would save every penny, and when I had gathered sufficient to start a little home she would come out and we would get married.

This fatal "fling" had put that out of the question for long enough now, and I was so ashamed and humiliated at my own idiocy that I wrote her a full confession, told her I was no longer worthy of her, and broke off our engagement.

From that time I sank deeper and deeper. My salary no longer accumulated, but dribbled away as I got it. To keep up my courage I indulged more and more heavily in intoxicants, till my brain lost clearness, and my work all interest. The men under me at last got enraged at having all the responsibility and extra work put upon them, without the compensating pay ; and one night they came and told me that if I did not pull up quickly they would report home to the company and get me dismissed.

One of them remarked bitterly that there seemed to be nothing that I would stick at now to get money, and he jeeringly remarked that there was only one iniquity he thought I had

missed so far, and that was to make up a false report that would send the shares down, then to buy them up cheap, and so reap a harvest. I was very angry with him at the time, but his words sank in and—I did it! Swiftly and secretly I sent private word home to a friend I knew I could depend on to set rumours flying, and sure enough our shares had a big fall for a couple of days, during which time I had scooped enough to make me a rich man.

Of course, I then disappeared, had a gay time under a different name in another part of the country, and had just come to the end of my madness and money when war broke out. I had only enough left to bring me home, so I came and joined up in the old country.

The hard military training and clean outdoor life soon made a man of me once more, and by the time we were ready for France I was as fit as any man in the army.

But all was not well with me within. There seemed to be constantly something in my brain saying, "Go to Winnie ; you love her still, and although quite unworthy of her, go just once, and let her know what you are doing. She cares too, in spite of all, and you will never see her again."

I felt almost driven against my will, so during

the few days' embarkation-leave, I went. I could not go to her home for fear of meeting the rest of her family, but I waited and watched for her, and it was my last night before I saw her. I had given up all hope of meeting her, when suddenly she came round a corner, and we were face to face. It was a shock for both of us, for I found I could not speak.

Winnie, after the first moment's intense surprise, quite simply held out her hand and said, " Tom, I am glad to see you and in uniform. I knew you would come to see me sooner or later, and hoped it would be this way."

Then I managed to tell her how I was hardly fit to speak to her, but could not go without saying good-bye, although my last chance had nearly passed. We turned by mutual consent, and walked far, talking earnestly. I told her everything, and her sweetness made me cry like a baby. She promised that if I ever came home, after the war was over, she would come away with me anywhere I liked, and that we would begin a new life together, and forget all the mistakes and sins of the past.

We said " good-bye " then, and I went sadly away, with the same voice inside saying over and over, " Never again ; never again ! you have a long, long way to travel before you can aspire to

such happiness. It won't be here! Never again, never again!"

It was enough to drive a fellow mad, and I think it did eventually, for when we got to France, and in the fighting line, I was in the forefront of everything, volunteering for all the most hopeless tasks, taking risks that were stupid and senseless, and fighting like a demon whenever I got the chance. And always at the back of my brain kept that persistent voice, "Never again, never again!"

One dark night, when standing on the fire-step, peering into the darkness of No Man's Land, waiting for I did not know what, a flare went up from the enemy's lines. The next second something struck my head; I felt myself falling down, and then I knew no more.

I awakened with a start of horror thinking I had slept at my post, but only to find myself still standing there—still watching, but with a curiously light feeling as if my brain were doubly clear, and my body in some marvellous manner re-charged with life and energy.

"Never knew that forty winks could make such a difference," I muttered to myself. "And standing all the time too! It was a narrow squeak, anyhow, for here comes the C.O., and if he had caught me slumbering, even on my

feet, gee ! but I would have caught it. However, it has done me good, and all's well that ends well."

The C.O. came along, and stopped beside me. "Hullo ! what's this ?" he exclaimed ; " why, that poor devil Tom is caught at last, right through the head and stone dead !" He was not looking at me, but at something lying on the ground at my feet. " Wrong, sir," I laughed. " I am not dead, but very much alive, potted a Boche not two moments ago, but this rifle won't work properly ; may I look for another ? there are plenty out there," pointing across the dark space in front. But he went sadly on to the next man, and took no notice of me.

" Not like him to be so surly," I said to myself, " but I will fetch a gun, without asking further permission." So I clambered over the top, and hunted about till I got one, then returned in safety to my post. " Silly beggars, those Huns," I thought ; " what a chance to miss ! But here goes for another of them, just to wake them up a bit !" I took steady aim at a spot where someone should have been, but again the rifle jammed, and refused to work. " Bust the thing," I softly swore, " I must get another," so off I set again and secured one more. " They will think the armoury has been transferred if

this goes on," I thought, "now, fire!" But once again the thing refused to kill a Boche. "The very last resource of the defeated soldier has come! I must report, rifles on strike!"

So I mused and sat down to await the return of the C.O., more from force of habit than because I was tired, for I felt unaccountably fresh. At last he came, and I jumped up and stood at attention. "Rifles won't fire, sir; I can't make out what is wrong with them!" I said.

But again he passed, and this time he went right through me! He apparently never saw me! Imagine my feelings if you can; I can't describe them. Think, any of you boys who may read this, what would be your feelings under such circumstances.

I stood still at attention, too petrified to move, till daylight came, and the watch was changed. The boys who had been with me left, and the others filed into their places. Stretcher-bearers came along and lifted the huddled mass the C.O. had stooped over, on to the stretchers. I suddenly took a notion. The first definite thought or feeling that had come to me since I was "passed through" was to look and see who it was that had been knocked out. And I saw—Myself!

I was staggering under that when I heard a mocking laugh at my side, and turning to see who the intruder was found myself face to face with a fellow not much older than myself, but repulsive enough almost to represent Old Nick. "Who are you?" I exclaimed. "Go away; I don't like the look of you." "You need not treat an old friend like that," he smirked; "you may never have seen me before, but my influence on your earth-life has been strong. When you first gave way to drink I was attracted to you, for like draws to like, you know; and I stayed with you urging you on from one folly (as the good people call it) to another, till now you are doomed to follow the downward career in spirit."

"Whatever do you mean?" I demanded. "I am not in spirit, whatever that is; I am alive, and will thank you to take yourself off. I like pretty people for company!"

"Then your actions should have been pretty," he laughed; "come along, man, don't turn virtuous now that you have come to our side. Come along and I will show you life as you never knew it on earth; for you may argue as you like, you are dead, you know. Shot through the head. That's why the C.O. did not see you, and walked right through you! Ha! ha!"

ha ! but it was funny ! Your body was carried away a few minutes ago, and you saw it, quite lifeless. There is plenty of fun and enjoyment here and mischief too, so come along and have a good time."

There seemed nothing else to do, and I was feeling too mystified and miserable to care, so I went with him. He took me to a " tavern in the town," a fearful place, where men and women were making themselves lower than any beasts that ever lived. He watched for a while with keen enjoyment, then said to me, " Those people are living over again their earth lives and indulging in all their old pastimes ! But a better place than this is a certain whiskey shop in the town where you used to revel. We will go there, and you can see for yourself how people in the physical body look from this side."

So we soon found ourselves in one of my old haunts, and there all the old craving came over me ! I was in the throes of wild temptation, and my voluntary guide suggested, " Get close to one of the drunkards, inhale his breath, and you will get some of the old satisfaction ! "

I hated the idea, it was so loathsome, but the desire for drink was strong, and I was just on the point of giving way when I heard a voice from far away crying, " Oh, Tom, Tom, come to me ;

never again, never again!" I stopped and listened. "Go on, you fool," jeered my guide; "that voice has no power with you, and if you listened it would stop all your pleasure."

Again it came, insistent and sweet, but this time, "Never again, never again!" came first, and then followed, "Tom, come to me!"

With one wild cry, "Winnie!" I fled the place; and guided by the voice calling to me I arrived beside my Winnie! She was weeping broken-heartedly, and was calling me. The news of my death had just reached her, and had nearly killed her. I was filled with remorse, for I should have been with *her* when the news came, not—ugh!

I was going to slip away, feeling utterly unworthy to come near her, when my arm was grasped by someone, and turning, I found her own spiritual guide. He told me to pull up, and be a man at last; that all was not lost; that I did not need to sink down in the spirit-world; and that here was work to do, which, if I did it faithfully and well, would break the bonds of sin that I had forged upon myself. He also told me that Winnie had never been strong, and that probably this shock would bring her earth-life to a close very soon; that if I wished I could still be worthy of her; if I would

pray earnestly for strength and guidance there was hope even for me. It would be a fight, he said, but love would be the guiding star, and I would win out.

I thanked him and promised that with God's help I would never backslide again ; so he gave me in charge of a band of workers who were helping the boys in the field.

I learned by unselfish work to forget myself. To those who were receptive enough to receive our thoughts, we suggested moves that often got them out of danger's way. We soothed the wounded, we received those who came over, and we went to their friends and tried to comfort them by telling them that there was no death.

When I had been at work some time I received another call, " Tom, come to me ! I want you ! " and I hastened to find Winnie dying. Her guide said, " You will get her, now, my boy, for you have proved yourself worthy at last ! "

So it was into my arms her beautiful spirit was given, and now we are together for all time. Our work goes on—a work of love. We bring together lovers who have been parted on earth ; and by our messages of hope and comfort we inspire those still suffering separation to bear up

just a little longer. We tell them that life on earth is short, but they have all eternity to look forward to together if their love endures.

I am afraid my story has been a long one, but I hope it will act as a warning to other boys to run straight always, for they might not all have the saving blessing I had of a strong, true, loving heart to recall them from the depths of hell.

ELEVENTH LETTER.

A DOCTOR WITH "GOD'S SEARCHLIGHT."

Another letter from a physician. (Not the same as the communicator of the Ninth Letter.)

We have come this morning, child, to have a talk with you. You are all alone but not lonely, because you are surrounded by a multitude of your invisible friends, who are drawn to you by sympathy and love. You want a little article for the *Gazette*, so we are going to try to give you the life of a man here that may be of interest, if only to show how natural is the life beyond, and how the work goes on from one sphere to another, according to the desires of the workers themselves. For we are all workers here, and hard workers too. But perhaps it will be best to let our friend speak for himself. He has never used a medium before, but we shall all help. The power is strong . . .

Good morning, child of the dark world! Oh, but it is dark coming here, even although to you

the sun may be shining. The clouds of ignorance and malice and grief and pain envelop the earth just as you see it on a black foggy wintry night. We shiver when we come in contact with it. But I have something brighter to talk of than that, which you know already for yourself.

When I lived on earth I was a doctor. I dwelt in a quiet little village, and devoted my whole time to the alleviation and cure of the ills that afflicted the people entrusted to my charge. But I was not content. Deep down I felt that there was a bigger work still I had to prepare myself for, but what it was I could not tell. It came suddenly.

One night I was rung up and asked to come at once to a child who had been taken suddenly ill, and was dying. As I hurried into my clothes a curious thing happened. I perceived a light that went in front of me as I descended the stairs, and that kept shining all the way to the patient's house. I was puzzled, but tried to dismiss the thought of it, as I was fond of the little one who was ill, and felt worried about him. When I reached the sufferer it seemed as if no human help would avail, and I was on the point of turning to the parents to tell them so, when the mysterious light appeared more strongly than ever, shining directly on to the

little body, illuminating it through and through, and revealing by the light of its wonderful rays a little spot that was causing all the trouble. It was far removed indeed from my own diagnosis, and I stood amazed, but it was a direct call which I dare not ignore. So I rushed home for the necessary instruments, gave the boy an anæsthetic, and started to work on the spot where the light still rested. I worked quickly and fearlessly, feeling myself under an influence wholly unaccountable, yet never doubting for one moment but that the guidance, whatever it was, was going to be the means of saving the little life. Soon the operation was completed and the sufferer lay in a calm sleep. I then seemed to wake up to the realisation that a miracle had been performed, and went home feeling a strange upliftment.

The next morning I awakened with only a hazy remembrance of what had passed, and was then seized by a fear of the consequences of my strange experience. I rushed off to my patient, but stopped on the way to wire for two eminent men from town to come at once, for panic had me in its grasp. When I reached the house I was met with smiles and tears and overwhelming gratitude. The boy was saved. On the arrival of the specialists I told my tale, omitting

nothing. One looked as if he thought I was mad. The other offered me an assistantship which I accepted. My life's work had really begun.

I lived to be an old man and a famous surgeon. Every operation I undertook was guided and directed by my "God's Searchlight," as I came to call it, and when at last I laid down the burden of the flesh it guided me into the higher world, illuminating my path, and making all seem bright and beautiful.

Many friends met me then, and life was too joyous almost to realise, but before long the old instincts revived and I wanted to be at work once more. I got in touch with a brotherhood of doctors, who were at work on all kinds of inventions for the cure of human suffering, and I joined them whole-heartedly. It was then I learned how my searchlight had been given me, and I expressed the wish that I might be allowed to help the doctors on earth, so often struggling in the dark. Permission was readily granted, and I am now working in the laboratories of the glorious spirit-lands to fit myself for the work.

TWELFTH LETTER.

“ Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

I have a very curious story to tell, but as I never told a tale before, I hope all mistakes will be overlooked and pardoned. I feel that once I have said my say and given my warning to others I will be free to rise up out of the conditions in which I find myself and to work my way up towards happiness and light. They tell me that I can gain that by unselfish work, so this is the first step. I have made a mess of my life on earth and unfortunately spoiled other lives too. I was born in Canada, on a farm, and grew up among brothers and sisters, a big, strong, wild boy. We had schooling of a kind, but I would have none of it. The confinement and discipline were too much for me, so one day my father decided to send me to sea. I was quite willing to go, for it was a new experience, and I hoped that the freedom of the life would suit me. I got on board a merchant ship as “ boy ” and then came my first real trials. There was no liberty whatever, everyone

was my master, and I was treated more like a slave than a human being, at least I thought so then. Now I see that I was a most objectionable boy to have on a boat, or anywhere else, utterly untamed, defiant, disobliging, selfish, and ignorant of the principles of civilised society. At last the crisis came when one night the Captain told me to bring him a cup of tea and something to eat. I had never been done all day running after some of them, so I just turned round on him and said "I would see him blowed first." He came forward and struck me, I hit back, and in a few minutes found myself seized by many exasperated men, and thrown into "quod" to cool myself. I took a lot of cooling, for I stayed there for what seemed weeks, as angry as ever. At last I was allowed out and the first thing I did was to run to the side and jump over. I had caught a glimpse of land not far away, so I struck out for that. As I swam I heard the shouts of the men on board. "Lower a boat." "Catch him up." "No, he will make it, he is a strong swimmer." "A good riddance, anyhow," and so on. They did not lower a boat, being only too glad to be so easily rid of me. Well, I reached land, coming ashore at a quiet little sandy bay. There I took off my clothes, spread

them out to dry and lay in the sun resting and making up my mind what was to be my next move. I decided to keep to the country and try to get on a farm. That succeeded and I was soon installed in a comfortable bothy and back at the work I had been brought up to. I pleased my employer all right for a time, till one day he found me making love to his daughter. He was very angry and ordered me off—told me that she was already engaged to a man with a farm of his own, and that he would not have any with only good looks to his name interfering. This raised my obstinacy and I determined to pay him out. I did not love his girl but had only made love to her for a bit of fun, but now I decided that if I could get her I would, if only for spite. I did, she gave me a love I little deserved, never having cared for the other man, but only having become engaged to him to please her father, of whom she was intensely fond. So when I left the farm she slipped away with me. We got married (thank heaven I had that spark of honour in my otherwise perverted make-up) and for some time tramped the country getting work where we could. But when winter came on at last, my wife required rest and care, and I had nowhere to take her to. I became irritable and unkind just when

she needed kindness most, and one day told her plainly that I did not want her any more. She did not utter one word, but just looked at me—such a look as I will never forget, and that haunts me eternally in this next world, as it did on the earth—and left me. For long after this I led a hand-to-mouth existence, and finally got back on a ship once more. It was a coal boat, heavily loaded. We put to sea. A storm came on ; she sprang a leak and went down. No one was saved and no one was heard of again. We simply sank in the dark waters and I thought that was an end of us. The first sensations were horrible, choking, fighting for breath, a singing in the ears, and unconsciousness. Then began my experiences here that I really came to tell about. The bits of my earth life I have given are in the form of a confession, for all is laid bare here. We can hide nothing, even from ourselves. Well, as I was becoming unconscious, I saw my old home, my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and a scene rolled up vividly. We were all sitting at table, a happy family, talking and laughing with, and at each other. Suddenly I saw a younger brother take something on to his plate that I wanted. I ordered him to give it up. He wouldn't, so I struck him viciously. Then the

scene that followed, when my mother wept, my father rose and flogged me and all the rest treated me as an outcast. When this scene actually happened I was sorry for myself, but now when it passed before me again I saw myself as I really was and was filled with disgust. That was only the beginning. Many scenes passed, ending up with the one when I sent my young wife away from me, in delicate health, in bitterly cold weather and with no money. Oh! the remorse that overcame me! It swept over my soul like a living furnace, and I prayed for the first time in my life. I prayed—and it was for oblivion. But I had sowed, and now the reaping time had come, and also there were only stinging nettles to gather in—one after another, and oh, how they stung. The faces of all I had ever hurt rose up before me, reproachful, regretful, or angry, and before each I had to bow my head in an agony of shame. Then they passed, and I found myself sitting alone in darkness. Silence all around; not even my own breathing came to let me know that I lived. I only suffered. This lasted for what seemed an eternity, till I could bear it no longer, and with a great effort rose up, lifted my arms, and cried for help—then fell back exhausted into the blackness around. Presently I became

aware of a voice speaking as through a dense fog. It said—"Sinful, rebellious soul, you cry for help. It is a selfish cry for yourself alone to take you out of the conditions your life on earth have sunk you into, or is it a cry for forgiveness for those past sins?" I tremblingly answered, "It is for shame and horror at what I have done, and a feeling of hopelessness and terror of the stillness and loneliness and darkness. Do not leave me I pray, for I am the most miserable creature alive." "No, I will not leave you here, for your soul has awakened at last, but you will have a long and hard climb before you attain to happiness. You will have from this side to build up good out of all your selfish evil deeds, and to devote your life to the helping of those whom you have injured, and many others whose lives have been indirectly influenced by your deeds on earth. "Only show me how," I answered, "and I will do my best." "Come then!" my guide said. I felt my hand grasped, and then, after a hard fight with the weight of blackness around me, I, with the aid of my protector and helper, gradually came out of it into a dim twilight where I could faintly distinguish objects and people. I was led to a little hut and told to lie down and rest, and pray for a clean unselfish

spirit, and that my guide would come when I was ready to begin my work. I did so, and while in that little hut I learned to see and know myself for what I really was, but also to feel that there was hope, even for such as I. I also learned to pray, and my constant prayer was that I might be allowed to undo all the harm my life on earth had caused. After a time my guide returned and said, "The time has come for you to begin your work. We will return to earth and you will tell the people there of your life, your continuous life, and by doing so you will show them in a very practical way how the reaping here follows the sowing there."

So I have come here this morning, brought by my guide, to make my confession and give my warning. Now I will go back to my own country and begin my work in earnest. But there will be no beautiful spirit lands and happy companionships for me till my work is accomplished, and till I have become purified through suffering and self-sacrifice. I am told that some day I will come again and tell the remainder of my story, for it is only really beginning. Pray for me, all who may read this confession, for the path of transgressors is hard, and long and steep. But the heights, sparkling through the mists, are beginning to show, so the climbing will not be in vain.

THIRTEENTH LETTER.

A SPIRIT BOY'S LIFE AND WORK.

I have come to-day to tell you, if I can, something of my life here. You often wonder what we do and how our lives are spent, so I am going to make an effort to tell you. I came here when little more than a baby, and the first thing I remember was being hugged and mothered by a lovely spirit-mother. The home I was taken to and brought up in was a beautiful one, in correspondence with the natures of the people dwelling therein. I learned, when I became old enough to understand things, that I had been adopted into this home by a husband and wife who had "come over" within a very short time of each other, who had been very happy on earth, but who had had one great want in their lives—that of children. So on coming here they asked that they might be given a little one to bring up and care for and love. Their prayer was granted, as are all good, unselfish prayers here, and in your world. One day, while they were sitting in their beautiful garden

talking quietly about their favourite theme—children, a friend came towards them carrying in her arms a little unconscious child—myself. She told them that she had been to earth, drawn by the pitiful cry of a mother there, whose little one was leaving her for the higher world ; that she had received the spiritual body of the child, and had brought it here, feeling sure that this was the home God intended it to come to. My new-found father and mother came hastily forward, thanked their friend, gave praise to God for all His goodness, and took the little pilgrim to their hearts and home. This was my introduction into spirit life, and a more happy childhood no one could have had. When I would be about five years old, according to your time, my mother told me about the mother I had left on earth, and said that I must go back to her often now, and try to help her all I could, because the earth life was a hard and difficult one, and the sojourners there required all the help and love we could bring around them from this life of light and joy. So she took me back to earth and into my old home. There I found my dear earth parents, and the baby sister I had left behind. My father and mother had never forgotten their little son, and I saw that they grieved for him often, so I

stayed with them as often as I could, and tried to make them feel that I was not dead, but alive and close to them. Meanwhile my life on the spirit world was progressing. I was growing up just as children do on earth, and was being educated and trained to fit me to become a good member of God's household. My spirit father took my education in hand, and used to take me about with him from one sphere to another as far as we were able to go. He told me about the different planets and how they affected each other and the earth; also about the influence of the great central sun on all life. He showed me how to read and write, and gave me all the different forms of instruction that the children on earth receive, but with this difference, that here we had our intelligence only to work with, untrammelled by the density of the physical brain, so that, when we are shown a thing once, our intelligence grasps it and retains it. All forgetfulness pertains only to the physical, so you can understand from that what a wide gulf there is between your methods of instruction and ours. I asked my spirit-father one day, why some children came here without any early experience and knowledge, while others had to grow up and become old in the physical body, and he told

me that we were all intended to live the earth life till we had reached a certain point in our evolution, but that life was so little understood by the people themselves that error and ignorance and sin caused, in one form or another, the cutting of the earth life prematurely ; but that those who so missed the infant school, as it were, in the earth body, had to return in the spirit one and gain their experience helping others.

So time passed till I had attained manhood, when my father called me and said, " The time has nearly come for you to return, my boy, and I would advise that you go to your earth parents. You have a young sister whom you can guard and guide, whose life will be, in many ways a hard one, and with whom you can strive after all that you have missed by coming here so young. Your duty lies there ! " So I returned, and for long worked beside my dear ones on earth. I often heard my mother talk of her little boy, for to her I still was a child, and my sister by hearing her speak, loved her little brother too. That made it easy for me to help because love is the greatest power and force in the universe. One day I received a call from my spirit parents and I returned to them at once. They told me that word had come to them that my dear ones on earth were soon to be

called to the higher life, and that we were to prepare a home for them. Oh! what a joyful time that was! They had been good and kind and unselfish always, so the materials they had provided for the building of that home were all beautiful. They loved the purple heather hills and the sea, so we chose a site there, using their good deeds and thoughts, and, putting all our love out on the work, we soon had a beautiful home created. Then we went back and waited, and at last my father came and we took him with rejoicing to his home. He had many friends gathered to receive him, for he was much loved, and his welcome was a wonderful one. But in a very short time I saw that he was not happy, and when I next went to see him, found the house empty. I guessed what had happened, and went to earth at once, and there I found him beside the wife he had left. He smiled joyfully now and said, "I could not live without her even in the beautiful summerland, so I cried to God to help me in my loneliness, and he sent an angel who told me to return and to wait for her, for soon I would get her once more, and then my home would be home indeed." So he waited while I went back to my childhood's home to get instructions, and rest and strength, to enable

me to begin my guardianship of my sister who was soon to enter into the struggle of life. It all happened as promised, and very soon my earth-father's prayer was answered, and he took home the wife he could not live without. I have two homes now and four parents ! Does it not sound strange ? But here all is harmony and love, for jealousy is unknown. I started my work and experience of the ways of the world with my sister, and for the first time realised how cruel men can be. She married a man who loved her, yet was unkind. She aspired to high thoughts ; he jeered. She wanted peace and love ; he gave her wild bursts of fury. She loved her fellowmen ; he disliked and distrusted them. Yet he loved her with a passionate jealous love that, had it been on a higher plane, might have given them both, and their children, a life of great happiness. Instead it was one of extreme misery to her. It was a dreadful experience, yet out of it God was working good, and I was there to do a little part in the bringing of it about ; and the struggle has now brought her up instead of crushing her down. Our parents returned at the critical moment when I thought that the stronger and more material spirit of her husband was going to gain the mastery, and that she would sink down,

spiritually broken into the depths of hopeless materialism, taking the children with her. But, by our united force and love, her inner vision was opened and she beheld the helping hands stretched eagerly out to her from the other world. She grasped them, and is now safely standing on the heights, above the turmoil and the strife, her little ones beside her. The struggle is over. The time left her will be devoted to the spiritual enlightening of mankind. She can see the messengers bending down from the higher to the lower world, and will go about pointing them out to those in distress whom they are always ready to help to succour and to save.

This is a little outline of my work since coming here, and it may give the people an idea of how close the two worlds are.

FOURTEENTH LETTER.

“CAST NOT YOUR PEARLS.”

I am another boy “killed in France,” but very far from killed. I never had such health and energy in all my life as I have had since I “died.” What an experience it all is, to be sure, and how blind and deaf all the people in their physical bodies are to all that is going on around them. We here, in our spiritual bodies, are only going at a different rate of vibration, that is all. Of course we do not see you, as you see each other. That could hardly be expected, but we see you all the same, and, let me whisper it, for it may give some a shock to learn it—we see you as you really are, not as you often pretend to one another to be. We, being in our spiritual bodies where nothing can be hidden, see you in your spiritual bodies, where likewise nothing is concealed, and you are manifesting through your spiritual bodies now, as well as your physical ones. Your physical bodies are the more dim and indistinct to us, although we can, under certain conditions, see

them too quite well. So be careful, all those of you who are feeling wrongful things of any kind, for they are all seen and known over here. But I did not come to preach, for I have little need to do that, but only to try to make you understand that those you have loved and lost are not dead but very much alive and with you still, but are often vexed at your thoughts and actions which you think no one knows of but yourselves.

I cannot give names, so am giving away no secrets when I tell you that I have suffered badly since coming here, because the girl I loved and felt I was fighting for, has not been honest with me. We parted, vowing to be true to each other, in life or death, for all time. I was "killed" six months afterwards, and my first waking thought here was to get to her before the news of my death could reach her, so that I might be able to break the shock a little. I was successful in doing so, and was standing beside her, with my hands on her shoulders, unseen and unfelt, when the news came. It was I then who received the shock, for when she heard, all she said was, "Poor boy! how awful for him to be sure, but that lets me out of a rather difficult position, for I was getting tired of him." *That* was death indeed, not the leaving of the physical body. I left her then and wandered

away, not caring what became of me, wandered on and on as it seemed for an eternity till at last I sank down and wished that I could really die. But help is always near for sufferers here when they most need it (it is with you too if you could only have faith enough to believe it and recognise it when it comes). For as I sat, lost in the blackness of despair, suddenly a light shone in front and looking up I beheld a beautiful woman smiling down at me. I arose, lost in wonderment at her brilliancy, and she spoke kindly, seeming to know all my trouble. "Dear boy," she said, "You have been casting your pearls. A love such as yours is never wasted nor lost, even although you mistakenly lavish it on one quite unworthy of it. If you will come with me I will show you where to radiate the light of a big generous heart so that instead of your love turning to bitterness you will see it springing forth into the beautiful flowers that garnish the garden of God." Immediately the whole world seemed to light up and my sorrow to fall from me as together we went forth into the great world of spirit. "First of all," my guide said, "We will visit the little ones, the pure in heart." And almost at once we found ourselves in a glorious garden, where running about among the flowers were countless children.

Children varying from tiny toddlers to those entering the portals of young man and womanhood. My guide was immediately surrounded by many of those young people who evidently knew and loved her greatly, while some of them looked with timid friendly eyes at me. "I have brought a boy to you who needs your help, little ones. He has given his most precious jewel to one who has thrown it away and lost it, and he is very lonely and sad. Do you take him to your hearts and comfort him." She smiled to me, and telling me that she would return shortly, left me among the children. I felt awkward for a moment, but almost at once a tiny little girl put her baby hand into mine and said, "Poor big boy, come and we will find your jewel, and keep it ourselves this time. We will put it in a safe place where it can't be lost." All the others who had been standing with us joined in "Yes! let us find it and keep it safely ourselves." So they led me off round the lovely gardens, stopping to look into the hearts of the flowers for my lost jewel. I forgot to be unhappy and helped with all my might, but we could not see it anywhere. Then my guide returned and the children told her that my jewel was lost indeed as it could not be found. "It will be found, little ones," she

said, " but not in the garden of flowers. Come we will go into the wilderness far from here, and perhaps we may find it there." So we all set off together to reach the wilderness. We did not walk but seemed to float along without any effort, and as we journeyed the scene changed. The flowers gradually disappeared. The sun got clouded over, and the day became dark and drear. Some of the children wanted to turn back, for they said this did not look like a place where precious jewels could be found. But our guide said, Yes, but this one had been thrown away and would be found in the wilderness, and that I would not be happy till it was recovered and placed in safety. " Well," they exclaimed, " he must be made to smile as we do, so we will go on till we find it." At last our guide stopped and said, " There is a bed of weeds, not very pretty to look at and with many thorns and nettles among them." " Then I will go into it and look," said the little one who had first offered me her help, " but keep hold of my hand tight while I hunt." So we went together into the heart of the clump of weeds, when suddenly putting down her hand my tiny friend cried, " I have got it ! a beautiful big diamond lying in the ground all trampled down, but not broken." She lifted it up, and

holding it firmly in her little fist simply shouted with joy. We all returned swiftly to the gardens and there the heart was placed into a fountain that was splashing and sparkling in the sunlight. "Leave it there till we find a place to put it," said our guide, "and children, you must take great care of it, for it is very precious, and it partly belongs to you now for always." She then led me away back to earth and to the girl into whose care I had first given it, then said, "Now look close and you will see what it all really means." So I looked close into the soul of the girl, and saw there a picture of the wilderness, of the darkness and thorns and nettles. "Some day," my guide said, "that wilderness will blossom out into a portion of God's garden, when it will be ready to receive the precious gifts, but not yet." So there I left my last lingering regret. The children have my heart, and I am happy. There is endless work to do here, and unlimited scope. No worldly interests come in to spoil and tarnish our friendships, and we are not only allowed to come, but are sent by the Giver of all good to tell you people still on earth these wonderful things.

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